

January 14, 2010

ARRA Update

An ARRA Update will be telecast on NET SAT Channel 105 (State Channel 04) at 10:00 a.m. (Central) on January 19, 2010. The telecast will be no more than one hour. For technical assistance contact the NET Help Desk at 800-698-3426. The powerpoint presentation used in the telecast will be posted by Thursday morning, January 14th, on the ARRA homepage at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ARRA/index.html> A DVD of the telecast will be sent to all ESUs following the broadcast.

This ARRA/NCLB Update will cover the State's definition of *persistently lowest-achieving schools*, the *reporting requirements for teacher and principal evaluation systems* and other data collection and reporting requirements of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund and the new ARRA School Improvement Grants.

School Improvement Grants Waivers

NDE is applying for waivers from the U. S. Department of Education to allow any local educational agency (LEA) in the State that receives a School Improvement Grant to use those funds in accordance with the final requirements for School Improvement Grants and the LEA's application for a grant. The application process requires public notice and an opportunity for members of the public to comment. Comments may be made on one or all four proposed waivers. Information on the waiver request will be on the ARRA website by January 15, 2010 at http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ARRA/School_Improvement_Grants.html. This site also contains links to the USDE Guidance on School Improvement Grants and the ARRA School Improvement Grant (State) Application. Note: NDE will also be applying for waiver concerning graduation rates that will be posted at a later date.

Time and Effort Logs/Semi-Annual Certifications for Federal Awards

OMB Circular A-87 Attachment B(8)(h) states that time and effort logs or semi-annual certifications must be kept for salaries and wages paid from federal awards (ARRA, IDEA, NCLB, etc.) for personal services. Time and effort documentation must be contemporaneous and reflective of actual hours worked for employees who work on multiple cost objectives. It must be prepared at least monthly and must be signed by the employee. Semi-annual certifications may be used in-lieu-of-time and effort documentation only in cases where employees are conducting work under one cost objective. The certifications must be prepared at least semi annually and must be signed by the employee or the supervisory official having firsthand knowledge of the work performed by the employee.

In order to verify compliance with the above requirements School Finance & Organization Services will be conducting a pre-audit review of the time and effort logs and/or semi-annual certifications for every district that pays salaries and wages from federal awards. On or before January 29, 2010 please submit, to the email address listed below, one completed time and effort log and one completed semi-annual certification form used by your district to fulfill the federal requirements related to personal services. School Finance & Organization Services will review the information received from each school district to verify compliance and will contact districts with questions or concerns. We will not contact districts whose forms are properly completed.

Please forward your completed forms to Bryce Wilson, by email to bryce.wilson@nebraska.gov or by fax to 402/471-2486. Please contact Bryce at 402/471-3570 with any questions you may have regarding submission of this request.

Reminders

NeSA-Reading and Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS)

Districts have until February 1st to update Student and School Enrollment templates for the 2009-10 school year through NSSRS before the final file is sent to our NeSA-Reading vendor. The “NeSA Reading Roster” is available through the NDE Portal on the NSSRS Verification reports page within NSSRS Validation to help districts facilitate with determining if there are errors or changes that need to be made in a student’s status. The “NeSA Reading Roster” is located under the Student Reports category of Assessment. By clicking on the “View Report” link, schools will be able to view the student information that will be used in the Spring 2010 NeSA-Reading testing. An up-to-date Student template and/or an up-to-date School Enrollment template may need to be submitted to NSSRS should any changes need to be made in a student’s status. Contact the NDE Helpdesk at 888-285-0556 (nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov) or the NDE Assessment Office at 402-471-2495 with questions.

ARRA Reports

The **ARRA Study of School Level Expenditures** is due Feb. 1, 2010. All districts that are eligible for Title I, Part A funds must complete this report. The Study of School-Level Expenditures is found on the Portal in the Consolidated Data Collections under the Data Collections tab.